

1Corinthians 18-05-20b

But let's resume our study now in 1 Corinthians chapter 7, and this is a very informative chapter even if marriage is not the issue of the day in our current situation because these principles of guidance apply in any decision area where we're trying to decide do I stay or do I go, do I continue to pitch my tent here or do I fold it up and steal silently into the desert. These are the principles, so we've seen the idea that it needs to comport with and be consistent with godly submission to good authority, it needs to enhance and contribute to my ability to maintain my self-control, it needs to conform to the clear commandments of scripture that come from the Lord, it should be that which promotes peace and doesn't cause contention, doesn't cause strife, envy, to the extent that it is up to us. Now if somebody else wants to lose their peace, if they want to get their scruff of their neck up, if they want to be contentious and make an issue, that's on them.

But to the extent that it is up to us to live peaceably, and this is the path of peace, this is less contentious than any other option open to me, and to the extent that I am able to defuse a situation, this is it. And so now we come to verse 17 and he says, but as God has distributed to each one, distributed here is one of my favorite words in the New Testament because it is so often misunderstood. This is the word that has to do with fundamentally dividing, to divide.

Now if you're going to separate from something, that's chorizo, C-H-O-R-I-Z-O, and you had that up in verse 15. If the unbeliever departs, if the faithless, if the untrustful departs, let him depart, a brother or sister is not under bondage, is not enslaved. And this is from Dulos, and it's a perfect passive indicative.

Passive means something has been done to us, right? And perfect means it is completed in past time. So the brother or the sister in such has not been enslaved, has not been enslaved. So we are not to be enslaved in this sense.

Now he says you can view yourself if you are a slave as God's freeman or the Lord's freeman, and if you are free, you can view yourself as the Lord's slave. But notice that with respect to God, with respect to the Lord, this is your area of service, your area of constraint and limitation on freedom is in the interest of the things of God. But you are not constrained and you are not in bondage with respect to the interest of the untrustful, the apostilla.

And as long as they are willing to maintain peace, as long as you can meet these criteria we've talked about, don't make a change. But if they want to make a change, you are not in bondage. You don't have to follow them and say, I'm sorry, but my faith says I can't leave you.

There's no divorce, etc. If they want to leave, you have not been enslaved. Not to them or to that situation.

You are a bond slave of Jesus Christ, as Paul so often identifies himself, the brother or the sister in such, implying that the other person is not a brother or sister, certainly not in practice and

perhaps not even in reality. But then we come to the end of that section and he says, how do you know, O wife, whether you will save your husband? How do you know, O husband, whether you will save your wife? And then we begin a new section, at least in your New King James. I went back and revisited the Greek on this and I want to point something out here.

I think this is a terrible division. And I think verses 16 and 17, they are one sentence and they should be one verse. So my suggestion is, wait until I explain it, but my suggestion is going to be scribble out or at least circle and put an arrow to a different place for live as you are called.

Because the answer to the question in verse 16 is in verse 17. But you don't see it, and I didn't see it initially until I went back and I was just doing my routine word by word, verse by verse translation. And I thought, whoa, wait a minute.

Because verse 17 begins, I may, E I space M E in Greek, I may. I means if or except, and may is the mild adversative, not, no. And it literally means if not, and it is often translated for English, except or unless.

And a good translation here is except that, or if not that, or unless this situation occurs. And it's a great, let me read you something. Hope I've still got it here.

Yeah, this is from a word study thing. And it says, I may views or assumes what precedes to be fact. So what came before is a fact and extends it to its negative possibility or exception, meaning otherwise or unless.

So if the question is, who knows if the husband can bring to deliverance the wife, or the wife can bring to deliverance the husband, except or unless, and here is how you know whether or not. This is the answer. How would you know except that, verse 17.

You see the force of it here? It's a terrible division. Because what he's saying is, how do you know, O wife, whether you will deliver your husband, or how do you know, O husband, whether you will deliver your life, except that God has distributed to each one, and as the Lord has called each one, so let him walk. What is he saying? The rationale for doing everything that he just said about remaining as long as the untrustful person is willing to remain, or departing but remaining unmarried, if that is the call.

He says, the goal in all of this, and the criteria in all of this is, God may be using this situation for one spouse to witness to the other with or without a word. How do you know if you should remain so that that will happen? How do you know if you should depart? What he says is, how do you know? Well, you wouldn't know except that God has called you. And what is his overarching theme in this whole chapter? Remain in the calling to which you have been called, unless spiritual criteria dictate to you to make a change.

Unless the guidance from God says make a change, remain as you are, because remain as you are is how you know whether or not you're going to deliver. If you can remain with an untrusting spouse, and they don't necessarily want to depart, and you can maintain your self-

control, you can maintain peace, everything is happening, but they're just not, no, I don't want to go to church, no, I don't want to listen to Bible class with you, but you're able to meet these other criteria, that is a strong indication that God is going to eventually deliver them. Because you are able to stay in your calling without having to flip to a new status, that's your message from God that your testimony and your presence and your witness is going to be effective in some way.

Now, they may be saved yet so as by fire, but if they come to an objection and say, well, Lord, I didn't understand, He says, look, I married you to somebody that lived out the faith and gave you a communication of the practical application of the Word of God every single day, so what's your excuse? But if God has called you to it, you are going to be able to remain in it. How would you know if you can save them or not except that God gave you that calling? And so long as you can remain in the calling, that's your hope. But this is one sentence, it shouldn't be two verses, there shouldn't be a big heading change here, because this is not a new topic being introduced.

But as God has, and He's starting a new paragraph, this is the end of verse 16. How do you know, O wife? How do you know, O husband? Except that God has distributed to each, and you have here, as the Lord has called each one, as God has distributed, and those are swapped. Half of the text tradition says, as the Lord has distributed and as God has called.

So which is it? Who calls and who distributes? Well, in your New King James, it's backward. This is the majority text tradition, somebody changed it somewhere down the road. P46, Papyrus 46, which is one of the, if not the earliest witness to the parts of the New Testament that it preserves, has this swapped.

Codex Sinaiticus has this swapped. Codex Alexandrinus has this swapped. And there's no correcting hand, there's no second guessing.

The earliest and best manuscripts uniformly say, as the Lord has distributed, as God has called. Now, why does it matter? I'll tell you why it matters. God is the one who calls.

God the Father. God calls. The Lord Jesus distributes.

He is the distributor of gifts. Who sends the Holy Spirit? And where do gifts come from but the Holy Spirit? And who distributes? Who decides who gets what gift? It's the Lord Jesus Christ. Who has walked in our flesh? Who uniquely knows through His own eyes, not that God the Father doesn't know everything the Son knows.

Not getting into that whole miasma. But functionally speaking and consistently in Scripture, it is God who calls. And it is the Lord Jesus who distributes not just spiritual gifts, but our circumstance.

The Lord Jesus is the one who intercedes for us, who makes His case before the Father about the situations that we are in. And it's important to get this right. And I not only encourage, I request that in your Bible you cross out the Lord and put God, you cross out God and put the

Lord.

That's what Paul said. And it makes a difference here. Sometimes a textual change is kind of eh.

This is not one of those. You need to understand this. And you look at parallel passages.

Look at the calling. The gifts and calling of God are without recall. Right? The gifts and calling of God are irrevocable it says.

It's a calling of God. God calls. The Lord Jesus distributes severally.

He is God's agent in administering and in individually specifying how the Holy Spirit works in our lives. Whether it's your spiritual gift or the circumstances of your life. The Lord Jesus is involved in that process.

He's the Lord. Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The God and Father is sitting on the throne.

The Lord Jesus is sitting at His right hand. And this whole thing, I've run into it from time to time, ran into it again this past week. You can have modal monarchism.

Well God is one and He just puts on three different masks but it's one individual person. Just in different modes. You know, He shows up dressed as three different people.

No. You can solve the Trinity. Everybody says, oh the mystery of the Trinity is so easy.

I took a whole course in Trinitarianism that just about killed me. It just nearly sledgehammered my brain into mush. It was taught by a Catholic guy.

It was a correspondence course I had to take. He was on cassettes and he droned on and on about this council and this creed. You know, trying to parse and decipher.

I can tell you the Trinity. I can solve the quote unquote mystery of the Trinity for you in one phrase. And I've done it before and you'll remember this.

It is God Inc. God Incorporated. There are three members of the corporation.

They are distinct and individual. They have assigned roles. They have individual personalities.

They have separate consciences. They have separate roles. They get together and talk to each other.

This is not God talking to Himself. The Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right hand. Now God's not jumping back and forth between chairs.

There are three separate and distinct individuals. We call them all God when we refer to the corporation. It's God Incorporated.

And when they act in unison and in concert and there's no reason to distinguish their corporate

decisions, their corporate policy, their corporate action, the Bible just says God. There are many times, however, when because they have voluntarily organized themselves into a subordination, which is the Father at the top, the Son in the middle, and the Spirit at the bottom, it doesn't diminish the quality of the Spirit in any way. It doesn't diminish the Lord Jesus Christ to be submissive to the Father, which is a lesson to everyone who thinks submission for wives to husbands or anybody to anybody is a bad thing.

We are to submit ourselves to one another in the sense of looking out for each other's interests rather than our own first. There's nothing wrong with submission if the Lord Jesus Christ submits Himself to the Father, if the Holy Spirit voluntarily submits Himself to both members of the Trinity and yet they are co-equal. What does that tell you? It does not diminish your value to submit to divinely constituted authority.

In fact, you express your value, you express your equality by your voluntary submission to God's authority. We are all sinners. We are all, as believers, saved by grace.

We have all been purchased with the blood of Christ, which is inestimably precious. It's not able to be estimated value. So how could you be worth more than me? How could I be worth more than you when we were purchased out of sin and out of slavery and out of death by the same blood of the Lord Jesus Christ? But there is submission in recognition of a higher and greater good, of God's authority.

So again, the Trinity, it's God incorporated. Three separate distinct individuals who have organized themselves for the purposes of human history. I don't know what happened in eternity past, because in eternity past the Word was with God and the Word was God, right? But the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

Now God can't be flesh and dwelling among us and be sitting on His eternal throne surrounded by the cherubim and the seraphim and all the rest of it, because there are those two individuals. And God, the Holy Spirit, is doing His thing. God incorporated.

That's the quote-unquote mystery of the Trinity solved. Every passage, every issue, every debate, all you have to do is apply that and it instantly becomes clear. And why people have agonized over it, I don't know.

So, here, as the Lord has distributed to each one, this is the Lord Jesus. As God has called each one. And notice Paul separates these two things.

He doesn't say as God has distributed and called, because it's two different roles. It's two different divine expressions. One by the Lord Jesus and one by God the Father.

And we need to keep both of those in mind. Why would he say as the Lord has distributed? The distribution is on earth. The distribution has to do with circumstance and gift and particular role and function in the body of Christ.

It's Christ's body. And he says, alright, you're my hand. You're my mouth.

You're my ear. You're my eye. You're my foot.

You are the shoulders that are going to bear some weight. The Lord Jesus organizes His own body. It's His.

And He loves it as any husband ought to love his wife as His own flesh. God has called. What has God called us to? What is this calling? Be diligent to make your calling and your choosing sure.

Be diligent. What is the calling? These are the principles and the doctrines and the commands of God to holiness, to sanctification. God has called us to respect His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to love Him and to serve Him and to pay attention when He distributes.

So Paul is moving up the chain of authority. He has said, you know, there's some things I'm suggesting. There's some things the Lord has said.

But ultimately the top of this chain of authority is the calling of God. Forgetting those things which are behind, I press toward the mark of the high calling of who? I press toward the mark of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. The calling is in Christ.

Christ determines the specifics of it. God has the general call to love and to serve Christ. So this counts.

There's theology here. So let Him walk. Now, as the Lord Jesus has distributed and as God has called, walk.

What is God's call? Produce the fruit of the Spirit. Glorify the Lord Jesus. You are His presence on earth.

You are His body, the church. So you need to be Him here. And you need to do that which promotes peace.

Was Jesus promoting peace when He drove the money changers out of the temple? Was He promoting peace when He called out the Pharisees and hypocrites and pronounced all of those woes? You have to think about that a little bit. This is why we don't just pick one principle and say, well, that's the determining factor. This isn't peaceful, so that can't be it.

We are called to make judgments. We are called to balance. All things are lawful, but not all things are edifying.

All things are lawful, but I will not be controlled by any. Remember that idea of control? If something is controlling me, I've got to get out from under it if it's anything other than God's Spirit and God's Word. If it's anything other than the distribution of the Lord and the calling of God, that's where my obligation is.

That's where my due loss bonds are, is in that realm. And if I'm unable to serve and unable to function, then I'll make a change, otherwise remain. So, verse 16 and 17 is one verse, no break.

Was anyone called while circumcised? This is God's call. No man can come to Me, except the Father draws him. If I be lifted up, I will draw all men to Myself.

God's call is from heaven. God has called all men everywhere to repent. Remember Peter says that in Acts.

God calls all men everywhere to repent, to change their minds, and to come to His Son, the Lord Jesus. Neither is there salvation in any other. There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

That's God's call. The gifts and the calling of God are without revocation. So, was anyone called while circumcised? You recognize that there is salvation in Jesus Christ, and you come to faith.

You begin to practice and walk as a Christian. Let him not make a change for arbitrary reasons. Was anyone called while uncircumcised? Let him not be circumcised.

Don't use your coming to faith as an occasion to start changing your circumstances, because you're inevitably going to be going astray, because the criteria are going to be self-gratification, subjective trying to please people, men-pleasers. This is going to involve something other than the fruit of the Spirit that he's just described. Circumcision is nothing.

Uncircumcision is nothing. Circumstance does not dictate. Circumstance does not dictate.

Even when the circumstance is, I always think in marriage terms, the strong argument for separation and divorce is always abuse. There is heinous evil going on in the household. I must separate and I must divorce.

Well, maybe you should separate. Maybe you should go separate ways, but the criteria is not there is abuse. Circumstance does not dictate.

Circumcision, uncircumcision is nothing. Slavery, freedom is nothing. Keeping the commandments of God is what matters.

If in an abusive situation you cannot keep your body as the temple of the Holy Spirit, you can't protect your children from abuse, you can't exercise your godly functions as a wife and mother or as a husband and father, there is abuse that goes in the other direction. We don't typically think of it. But it isn't, well, I'm being abused and that's just wrong.

Recruits in boot camp think they're being abused and they think that's wrong. It is not in and of itself the fact that you're being knocked around or that there is physical harm. That's a bad thing, but it's not the criteria.

The criteria is spiritual and that's where you look. Now, that criteria is going to usually cover

physical abuse pretty thoroughly, but just get the order right. It's not, well, nobody should be knocked around.

Nobody should be prevented from living their life under God as they should. That's the controlling authority. That's the criteria.

That's the principle. Circumcision is nothing. Uncircumcision is nothing.

This Paul the Pharisee, Hebrew of the Hebrews, circumcised on the eighth day is saying circumcision is nothing. Why would he say that? Well, of course it's something. What is his point? The spiritual criteria trumps it, outranks it, supersedes it, defines it.

If circumcision becomes an issue, the Judaizers, yes, but spiritual criteria tell you. The example of Titus comes to mind. So, when you get to this, each should remain in his calling.

Let's skip down to verse 26. He says, "...continue to do what you have done concerning virgins. I have no commandment from the Lord, but I give judgment as one whom the Lord in his mercy has made trustworthy." I think, and this is just the word for think here, *nomizo*, I believe, if I look at it.

I think that this is good because of the present distress, because of the present necessity. This is *anagke*, A-N-A-G-K-E, because of the present necessity. A-N-A-G-K-E.

Keep your finger here and turn over a page to 1 Corinthians 9 verse 16. Because what is the circumstance here? There is a necessity, Paul says, there is a circumstance right now, because of this, it says distress, but it's not distress. And you're going to have to mark out distress and put something else.

He says, the whole idea is the last half of this chapter counsels celibacy and non-marriage, if at all possible. Unless you're going to go up in flames, try to stay unmarried, it's better, because you can focus on the Lord. It's not what it says.

And that argument goes astray right here, because it is not because of the present distress, it is the present compulsion, the present necessity, *anagke*. 1 Corinthians 9 verse 16, Paul is talking about his apostleship and his authority. I've used none of these things, better for me to die, that anyone should make my boasting void.

For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for necessity is laid upon me. Not distress, this is compulsion. The Lord Jesus has distributed to me the gift of apostleship, personally by the way, on the Damascus road.

If I preach the gospel, why should I boast or glory in that? For *anagke* is laid upon me, necessity, compulsion is laid upon me. Woe unto me if I don't preach the gospel. By extension, what is your assignment? If you've been assigned to be married, woe unto you if you try to break out of that marriage.

If you were assigned and given a gift of celibacy, but you're afraid you don't fit in, or it looks bad, or it's socially unacceptable, woe unto you if you try to enter into marriage for the wrong reasons. If you make any circumstantial change, especially in an area where God has put a necessity, you're supposed to be this way. Woe, necessity is laid upon me.

This word also occurs in Acts 26.11. Keep your finger in 1 Corinthians 7 and go back to Acts. You want to get a flavor for this because this is Paul's justification for counseling people to remain unmarried. Good for a man to remain as he is.

This is Acts 26.11. He's talking about what he did before he came to recognition of the Lord Jesus. He was persecuting the saints, shutting them up in prison, casting his vote against them for death. I punished them often in every synagogue and compelled them to blaspheme.

I placed necessity on them. I compelled. I made it necessary.

I said, blaspheme or die. I placed a necessity upon them. Now, would that distress them when they're trying to be pushed against their conscience? Perhaps, but the root meaning of the word is compulsion, making something necessary.

You have the same thing in, flip a page in Acts to Acts 28.19. To see the voluntary nature of something like this. He had a trial. They had examined me and they wanted to let me go because there was no cause for putting me to death.

But, 28.19, when the Jews spoke against it, I was compelled to appeal to Caesar. I found it necessary to appeal to Caesar. This was the only course of action that I felt I had open to me.

I was compelled. I had anadke to appeal to Caesar. Now, especially pertinent, turn to Galatians chapter 2, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians chapter 2. After 14 years, I was compelled to be circumcised.

I did not lay necessity on him. I did not compel him to be circumcised. Skip down to verse 14.

The rest of the Jews were playing the hypocrite. Barnabas carried away with their hypocrisy. They no longer ate with the Jews when the men from James came.

Remember that? When I saw they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before them all, if you being a Jew live in the manner of the Gentiles and not as the Jews, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews? Why do you compel them to be circumcised when they are uncircumcised? Titus at the beginning, the Gentiles with respect to Peter's pressure on them to under the influence of men from James up in verse 12. So this is anadke. There is a necessity.

Somebody is putting pressure on people to do a thing. It can be inner pressure. It can be external pressure.

Finally, flip a few pages over in Galatians to Galatians chapter 6, verse 12. As many as desire to

make a good showing in the flesh, these would compel you to be circumcised, only that they may not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. Remember in the beginning of this letter to the Corinthians, he said, talking about the cross of Christ.

These who want to make a good showing in the flesh create this compulsion. And you get the idea that in Corinth there is a present compulsion for those who say it's good for a man not to touch a woman, or it is good to be married. People often get this, especially girls, when they start approaching 30, their parents and their friends and everybody, when are you going to get married and you're too picky and all of that.

And there is necessity laid on. Well, whatever the nature of the necessity is, it pertains. That's why he spent a whole chapter on marriage.

And in Corinth, the pressure, the compulsion, the necessity was created. And he says, because of that present necessity, it is good for a man to remain as he is. You may have to fight some pressure, but I counsel you to use your spiritual noggin, your spiritual guidance and stay as you are.

Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be loosed. Are you loosed from a wife? Do not seek a wife. Some of this pressure may have actually caused people to enter into engagements or to break engagements.

So have you been bound? Don't seek to be loosed. Were you loosed? Don't seek to be rebound. You can't take a rule that says, well, marriage is better than non-marriage or non-marriage is better than marriage.

What is his argument throughout this chapter? Even when there is compulsion, I counsel you to remain as you are. Think about the calling of God. Think about the distribution of the Lord Jesus.

Whatever the circumstance is, including whatever compulsion is floating around that you may either have to resist or disregard, I counsel you to remain as you are. Even if you do marry, you have not sinned. A virgin marries, she has not sinned.

Although such will have Philipsis in this life, and I would spare you. This is the same word when it says in another place, he that spared not his own son, but gave him freely. He that spared not.

You can look up spare in your Strongs or in your Concordance. It's always the same word. I wouldn't want to lead you into, remember Jesus told his disciples, ask the Father to not lead you into, Jesus, I would spare you.

And if you've got a weakness, I wouldn't want you to be tested and fall. So Paul's personal feeling is, I don't want to create trouble for you by dictating what you ought to do in a particular circumstance. Use these criteria and figure it out for yourself.

Lead yourself toward, take yourself toward, direct yourself toward the fruit of the Spirit, toward peace, toward that which promotes that fruit instead of putting yourself in the way of Philippians. I would spare you. This I say, the time is short from now on.

Look at verse 32, and this is our closing thought. And this is where I think the most divergence occurs in interpretation of this chapter. And when I say divergent, I mean I am divergent from everybody else I've read.

And usually, as my dad used to say, if you look around and they're all out of step but you in the formation, chances are it could be you. But I feel on confident ground here, and I'm going to show you why. He who is married cares about the things of this world, cares about.

And this is from Marimnao. Now, I want you to look at the places where this word is used. Let me get myself down to verse 32.

It is translated in some cases, unanxious. But this is from Marimnao. This is the alpha privative, a marimnas, free from care. This particular form is pretty much only used here.

So what you want to do then is go down to Marimnao or Marimna. And this is the verb, Marimnao, and it means to worry, to worry. And this is almost always sinful worry.

So it is used in the Synoptic Gospels by the Lord Jesus 19 times. What does it mean? Matthew 10, 19, when they hand you over to governors and authorities, Jesus tells the disciples, this is Matthew 10, 19, do not worry about how or what you are to say. It will be given to you in that hour what you are to say.

Don't Marimnao, kind of like Moses, I'm slow speech and have a slow tongue. God says, I will be with your mouth. I will teach you what you will say.

Don't worry about it. Marimnao is undue concern. Undue as in sinful for a believer.

Every place it occurs, this is what it means. The parallel in Luke 12 is the same thing. You go to Matthew 13, 22, the parable of the soils and the seed.

The one on whom seed was sown among the thorns, this is the man who hears the word and the worry of the world and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word. Worry, Marimnao, Marimna. Talking about Mary and Martha, when Jesus comes in Luke 10, Martha is distracted with all her preparations.

She came and said, Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the serving alone? Lord says, Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things. You are Marimnao-ing, and that's not good. Only one thing is necessary and Mary has chosen it, and that's the spiritual priority.

You're worrying too much. You think about all the rationalizations Martha could offer for getting the housework done, getting the meals made. Well, she couldn't sit at your feet if I

wasn't running the sweeper and so on.

He says, Martha, you are worried, and this is a mild and gentle rebuke. That's Luke 10, 38-42, if you want to write it down. 2 Corinthians 11-28, where Paul talks about, this is probably the only case where you could try to make a positive case, where Paul says apart from all the other things that are happening to him, there is the daily pressure of worry for all the churches.

And he says, he's basically admitting, I probably worry too much about all the churches. So, it universally has a negative connotation. And so, what does he say here? He says, I want you to be a Marimnos, in verse 32.

You should be unworried. So, if he says, I want you to be unworried, then any worry that he mentions is going to be something he does not want, right? So, he says, and it's often actually clearer in Greek than it is in English. I want you to be a Marimnos.

The unmarried is worried about how he might please the master. That would be a bad form of worried. Remember when it says, be careful for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, make a request known to God, be careful for nothing, that is Marimnos.

Be careful for nothing. Do not worry for anything. He doesn't even say, worry only about the things of God.

He says, you should not worry. This is obsession. This is excessive concern.

It is undue overthinking. The unmarried, and this is the idea of potential. When you are unmarried, didn't he just counsel everybody to, if you are unmarried, remain as you are? But then he says, the unmarried can be anxious about how he might please the master.

You don't have to be anxious about that. You don't have to worry about how to please the master. We are told how to please the master.

We've got firm guidance on this. Examine yourself. See if you are in the faith.

Cultivate the presence and power of the Spirit. Expose yourself to the Word. Ruminates.

Reflect. Think about. Concentrate on.

Review the Word of God day and night. You don't have to worry how you might please the master. What he is saying is, there is an equal potential for worry on either side.

If you are unmarried, you can be too worried about your spiritual life. You can be over-concerned about your spirituality and fail to actually go out and live your life and look at the guidance you've already got. The married can be worried about the world and how he might please his woman.

If you love your wife as your own flesh, why would you not want to be worried about your wife?

Why would you not want to be equally worried about pleasing your wife as you are about pleasing the Lord? You see the correspondence here? All of this worry is presented as a bad thing. You can over-worry about pleasing the Lord. You can over-worry about pleasing the woman.

And you can be divided. It's funny, he's talking about inheritance. You can be divided.

Instead of your inheritance being divided to you, you get divided. The woman, the unmarried, and the virgin can worry about how she might be holy in body and in spirit before the Lord. But the married woman can worry about the world and how she might please the man.

And she shouldn't do that either. You shouldn't worry about how to please the husband. The husband shouldn't worry about how to please the wife.

There's firm guidance on this. Do what you've been told to do. You don't have to agonize.

You don't have to torture yourself. You don't have to get into sinful over-concern. Be balanced.

You're in a calling? Function. You've got guidance? Use it. Don't obsess.

Don't overthink. Don't distract yourself and be deflected by worry. Be worrying about nothing.

What's the alternative? What's the rest of that verse? Be careful for nothing but. In everything, spiritual, marital, circumstantial, by prayer, by faith, by faith, by prayer, and supplication, lay it before the Lord. Let your requests be made known to God.

And what's the result? The peace of God will keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Peace, not worry. If you have time, you can do a word study on this.

The unmarried woman and the virgin anxious. The married woman anxious. Neither one of those is right.

It's the same word in both. One of them can't be right and the other one wrong. It's not just because of the object.

It's the worry that is in view. And he says, I'm not trying to put a leash on you, but that you can serve the master properly and consistently and undistractedly. That's the end of verse 35 there.

What is the goal? I say this for your profit, not to constrain you, not by way of command. Literally it says not to put a noose around you, but for what is proper, that you can serve the Lord without distraction. Worry is a distracted overthinking.

I used to worry if I was listening to enough Bible teaching. I wanted to get to super grace in a minimum amount of time. And I was overthinking and worrying too much about it and failing to do some things I was supposed to do.

That's the upshot. That's the goal here. Leave your calling as it is unless there is a compelling

spiritual reason to change.

How do you know if the reason is compelling? Submission, self-control. Does any particular clear command of scripture endorse or forbid that change? Does it lead to peace? Are you able to function without worry? Casting all your worries upon Him, you don't keep them. Not even your worry about how to be more spiritual.

Worry is always bad. It is always a sin. And I think we've missed that and decided, well, some of this worry is good because it's directed toward the Lord.

No, it's not. I say this for your profit. Serve the Lord without distraction.

And if you are distracted by whether or not you're doing enough, if you've ever been guilted, you hear about somebody or meet somebody or they're talking about, oh, I just led somebody to the Lord last week, or my church is doing all these wonderful things. And you begin to look at yourself and say, well, gosh, I wonder if I'm really, maybe I don't do enough. Maybe I ought to make a change.

Maybe I should go talk to my neighbor and see if they're saved or I should do this or I should do that. If you start worrying about that, you're doing the wrong thing. You don't solve that problem by worry.

What do you do? You cast that worry on the Lord. If it crops up, release the straps, take it to the Lord in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving. Let your request be made known to God.

Lord, is this something I should make a change in? Show me. I delight to do your will. I want to do your will.

If I'm deficient, show me. Examine me. Purge me with hyssop.

Show me my secret faults. Ask, seek, knock, lay it before the Lord, and then relax and maintain your peace. Worry even toward your spouse, even toward the Lord, is not good.

It's not profitable. Doing what you're instructed to do, what we are guided to do by God's Word, is the key. And that will leave us with peace.

It will leave us submissive to the will of God. It will leave us normally within whatever calling we've been called in. We don't have to try to change circumstances to do something different or do it better.

Watch for the leading of the Lord prayerfully, peacefully, and always looking to this kind of guidance. That's chapter 7, and it's so important for us to get. It expands way beyond just marriage alone.

Well, let's close here in a word of prayer, and we'll pick up in 1 Corinthians 8, and start looking

at the role of conscience next time. Father, thank you for the truth of your Word. Thank you for how powerfully it convicts us and cleanses us as washing of water in the hands of your Holy Spirit.

It is such a powerful agent of change when we need to change, and an agent of endurance and consistency where we need to stick and to stay. We pray that we can discern those areas and make those decisions that lead to consistency and faithfulness and reflecting the glory of the Lord Jesus now and in those days in the future when we will have the opportunity to serve in the kingdom of Christ and ultimately in your own kingdom. We pray these things in Jesus' name.

Amen.